

**Single Family Design Guidelines Update/  
Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance Update**

**ISSUE PAPER K**

**Draft  
Story Pole  
Option**

The purpose of this issue paper is to provide a **draft option for story pole requirements** for Steering Committee discussion. The Steering Committee preliminarily discussed Story Poles as part of the Good Neighbor Policy Paper G on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The original Issue Paper G Story Pole discussion, listing advantages and disadvantages of different Story Pole requirement approaches, was covered on pages 10 – 14: (please see:

<http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/NR/rdonlyres/D79CC42E-0DC2-41AA-9FF3-828C5AC795C6/0/IssuePaperG.pdf>

or go to [www.santabarbaraca.gov](http://www.santabarbaraca.gov) and click on the “Residents” tab at the top of the page, then “Home and Property” in the left column, then “major planning efforts”, then “Single Family Design Guidelines/NPO Update”, then “Archives 2004” then scroll down to Meeting #13.)

At the November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Steering Committee created a Story Pole Subcommittee. The following pages contains the results of the Story Pole Steering Subcommittee discussions, a draft option to revise Design Review story pole requirements.

**Attachment:** Story Pole List Serve Responses, distributed by the City of Ojai, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005  
Source: League of California City’s Housing Community and Economic Development Policy Committee’s (HCED) List Service.

**DRAFT CITY OF SANTA BARBARA  
NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION ORDINANCE  
STORY POLE AND VISUAL AID REQUIREMENTS  
FOR SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS**

*(Italics: New wording, different from existing Visual Aid Requirements For Development Applications.)*

**PURPOSE**

*All proposed new Single Family Residential Structures and additions/alterations to existing Single Family Residential structures may require visual aids to determine consistency with the Neighborhood Preservation Ordinance (NPO). The purpose of story poles is to assist the Architectural Board of Review (ABR) or Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC), staff and interested neighbors (and if proposal is appealed, the Planning Commission and/or Council) in determining consistency regarding appropriate size, bulk and scale; height; neighborhood compatibility and/or minimizing impacts on important public views.*

**DEFINITIONS**

“Visual aids” may include, but not be limited to, story poles, photo simulations and other means, such as models to assist in understanding a project’s size, bulk and scale in relation to the neighborhood and/or its effects on important public scenic view. In most cases, story poles are the primary visual aid used or selected to demonstrate the project’s size.

**A. WHEN REQUIRED**

Whenever any portion of a new single family residential building or new addition exceeds 17 feet in height from existing grade; story poles and story pole plans may be required. The ABR, HLC (or staff, when the requirement is obvious) will determine whether and to what extent story poles and plans are required. This determination will be based on the following criteria. Each criteria type includes how likely and to what extent poles and plans will be required.

1. **High FAR Applications:** *Single Family Residential proposals with a total project Floor Area Ratio at or exceeding 85% of the maximum FARs **will likely be required** to provide full level story pole requirements as detailed below. (The ABR/HLC may grant exceptions to this requirement based on exception process detailed below.)*
2. **Upper Story Applications:** *Single Family Residential proposals involving large multi-story (2 or more stories) development **may be required** to provide full level story pole requirements or visual aids as detailed below. Factors that may trigger this requirement are the following:*
  - a) *Vertical design elements including steep roof pitch, high volumes, tall plate heights and towers.*
  - b) *Neighborhood context where buildings are proposed that are significantly taller than other structures in the immediate neighborhood.*
3. **High Visibility Locations:** *Single Family Residential proposals based on location **may be required** to provide full level or standard level story pole requirements or visual aids as detailed below. Factors that may trigger the level of this requirement are the following:*
  - a) *Project in close proximity to streets.*
  - b) *Significant topography of the building site and significant property slope.*

- c) *In open hillside areas, near ridgelines and adjacent to public views.*
4. **Hillside Area Locations:** *Single Family Residential proposals located within the Hillside Design District **may be required** to provide full level or standard level story pole requirements or visual aids as detailed below. Factors that may trigger the level of this requirement are the following:*
- a) *Significant topography of the building site and percentage or degree of property slope.*
  - b) *Potential looming nature and height of the proposal.*
  - c) *The potential impacts to private views and privacy of neighbors.*
5. **Zoning modifications:** *Single Family Residential proposals which propose zoning modifications into required setbacks **may be required** to provide basic level story pole requirements or visual aids as detailed below.*
6. **Other Basis:** *Single Family Residential proposals where concerns are raised from public testimony or from written comments that the Board considers legitimate concerns **may be required** to provide some form of story pole requirements or visual aids as determined appropriate by the Board and as detailed below.*

*Exceptions to the requirements for and the extent of providing the story poles or visual aid requirements will be determined by the ABR or HLC (See Section E) at the projects first meeting (or subsequent meetings if Board/Commission feels significant changes have been made to project design to merit pole or other visual aids). If all or some story poles are required, full requirements for certification and photo documentation are to be provided.*

## **B. LEVELS OF STORY POLE INSTALLATIONS**

1. **Full Level-** *All major building forms, corners, ridges, eaves, rakes, outer plate heights (not the outer edge of the eaves) and ridgelines shall be shown with vertical poles and string lines. In addition, stake and string or chalk the property lines where they are not clear and outline the building footprint(s) with stakes and strings or chalk lines. All roof planes outlined to show full body of structure. Also, mark all trees proposed to be removed with bright tape or stakes.*
2. **Standard Level-** *Selected building forms as determined by the Board or Commission shall be shown with vertical poles and where requested, string lines. Poles at all building corners at correct heights are to outline portions of selected roof forms. Show location of any stakes or chalk/string lines used to outline the building footprint.*
3. **Basic Level -** *Selected locations at highest building elements as determined by the Board or Commission shall be shown with vertical poles only. Poles to have colored flag/tape markers at specified heights and at highest ridge roof point where most view impact. Locate any stakes or chalk/string lines used to outline the building footprint.*

*Other Visual Aids may be requested to be provided in addition to or as an alternative to story pole placement (see Section F.)*

## **C. STORY POLE PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS**

1. *Submit to City staff the Story Pole Plan using the site plan for the project.*
  - a. *Show location and height of each pole.*
  - b. *Show location of major plate heights and ridgelines to be identified in the field. Focus on major ridgelines and wall plate lines along the building edges. The*

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**May 17, 2005**

goal is to show a simple "box" that outlines the mass of the building. It is not necessary or appropriate to include all of the articulations. Do not forget to account for proposed changes in grade with depictions of proposed finished height and elevation notations.

- c. Show location of any stakes or chalk/string lines used to outline the building footprint.
  - d. A legend shall be included on the Story Pole Plan that shows the location of each story pole with a symbol for each story pole that includes its number location and height. In addition, all stake locations and all chalk/string line locations shall be noted.
2. *City staff will review the Story Pole Plan for completeness and accept or ask for revisions. Hardships or unique aspects of proposed installation preventing full compliance with requirements can be resolved with staff at that time.*
3. *Timing- Story poles to be complete at least (3) three calendar days prior to the scheduled ABR or HLC\_review meeting date as agreed and arranged with review Board/Commission. Planning Staff shall notify the ABR or HLC as soon as verification is provided that the story poles have been erected. The applicant must submit photos of the story poles to Planning Staff as verification that the installation is complete. The installation shall stay in place at least two days place after the design review site visit and scheduled ABR meeting date. This extended time period may be waived by the ABR if the story pole placement will result in a safety issue or in substantial obstructions to the existing use of the property. For major projects, longer installation periods may also be required. The applicant may choose to leave the installation in place until the appeal period is over.*
4. **Post Hearing Notice:** The site notice shall have an indication if story poles may be required for the site location.
5. *Adequacy: City staff will attempt to review story pole installations for adequacy prior to ABR or HLC notification. However, review of photographs may be an acceptable form of verification. In the event required story poles are not installed, or are inadequate, the applicant will be requested to install or improve the story poles and the project hearing will then be continued to a future date to allow the decision making board or commission to make an additional site visit.*
6. *Notification: HCL/ABR and interested neighbors will be notified for either an organized site visit or for individual unscheduled site visits. Applicants privacy requirements will be respected when determining the arrangements for site visit.*
7. **Photographic Record:** Once the story poles are in place, the applicant shall photograph the story pole installation, including any angles from which it is visible to the public. Polaroid photos are not acceptable. Where the project has the potential to affect important public scenic views, additional photos from more distant points may be required. Include a plan or map showing the locations from which the photos were taken and the direction of the photos (i.e., with an arrow), keyed to the photos. The record shall be submitted to the Planning Division as soon as the installation is complete and prior to removal of the story poles. It is recommended that at least one of the photos include a person next to a story pole to provide scale. In addition, prior to issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy for the project, the applicant will be required to submit photographs of the completed building from the same locations as the photographs taken of the story pole installation for recordation purposes.
8. **Certification:** Story pole installation shall be certified by the licensed professional (surveyor, engineer, architect, landscape architect or contractor) who installs the story poles or by the

licensed professional who prepares the story pole plan. The certification shall be submitted to staff after installation of the story poles, and before their removal. See attached certification form.

**D. STORY POLE INSTALLATION PROCEDURES -**

1. Materials: Story poles should be made of 2x lumber, PVC piping or other sturdy material and should be properly braced for safety purposes. The connections used to show ridgelines and plate heights should be made of bright construction tape or netting and installed in such a way to remain taut during review period. Other materials may be acceptable, subject to approval by the Planning Division.
2. Placement: Identify what level of Story poles is being required and complete as specified. Also, mark all trees proposed to be removed with bright tape or stakes. If there is substantial grading that will result in tall and/or long retaining walls, the Planning Division may request that their location and height be marked on the property. The number and placement of story poles may be reduced in order to reduce costs, subject to consultation with the Planning Division or Board or Commission to assure that there will be sufficient story poles to illustrate the end product. Please note that a licensed professional, such as a surveyor, engineer, architect, landscape architect or contractor, must either carry out or certify installation.
3. Examples: As records of story pole installations become more available, a notebook containing examples will be available at the Planning and Zoning Counter at 630 Garden Street.

**E. CRITERIA FOR EXCEPTIONS**

One or more of the following criteria will be used by the ABR and Planning Division to determine if an exception from the story pole requirement will be granted:

1. The proposed structures are clearly consistent in terms of size, bulk and scale with other buildings in the surrounding neighborhood.
2. The proposed structure is the same height as or smaller than other existing buildings in the neighborhood.
3. The proposed structure(s) will not involve blockage or substantial reduction of an important public scenic view *or will not likely violate good neighbor policies and guidelines.*
4. The proposed structures will not be on or project above a topographic ridgeline.
5. The existing condition of the site (dense vegetation, existing buildings, etc.) does not allow for adequate story pole installation. If this is the case, one or more of the other types of visual aids will be required.

NOTE: See the Design Review Board Submittal Requirements for basic photograph requirements for all submittals.

**F. OTHER VISUAL AIDS**

In some cases, additional visual aids may be required or recommended. The requirements for these are

outlined below.

1. **Photo Simulations.** These may be required on a case-by-case basis, as determined by the Planning Division.
  - a. Photo simulations shall be completed using either panoramic photographs or several photographs put together. Polaroid photographs are not acceptable. A computer simulation may be used. Photo simulations shall be mounted and be able to be folded to 8½" x 11" size.
  - b. At a minimum, the proposed project shall be shown as an overlay over the existing property, showing the existing buildings on either side of the proposed project for a minimum of one parcel in either direction. The photographs should be taken at eye level (approximately 5 feet above grade). Reduce proposed building elevations to match the scale of the photographs and overlay on the site photograph. Color the elevation to match the proposed materials. If landscaping is shown, it shall be shown at no more than five (5) years growth unless it is included as a separate overlay. It is important to verify the accurate depiction of plate height, overall roof height and other measurements.
  - c. Include a map or plan showing the locations from which the photos were taken and the direction of the photos (i.e., with an arrow), keyed to the photos.
2. **Three-Dimensional Massing Model:** In some cases, a massing model showing both the project and structures in the immediate neighborhood may be required, as determined by the Planning Division. Design details are not required; however, all roofing variations, wall articulation and eave lines (including plate heights) must be shown. Major trees should also be included as part of the model. Changes in topography in the area covered by the model must be shown accurately.
3. **Perspective Drawings:** In some cases, perspective drawings from one or more prominent viewpoints may be required, as determined by the Planning Division. All roofing variations, wall articulation and eave lines (including plate heights) must be shown. Major trees should also be shown. These drawings must be drawn from the viewpoint of a person (approximately 5 feet above grade).
4. **Rendered Streetscape Elevations:** In some cases, a rendered streetscape elevation may be required. The elevation may need to show all of the buildings on the block, including the proposed new building. This elevation should be no less than 1/8" scale and should be in color. An additional plan sheet might include building elevations that are color-coordinated to show the setback from the street (0 to 5 feet, 5 to 10 feet, etc.).
5. **Comparative Building Study:** In some cases, a comparison to existing buildings will be required. This will assist in visualizing the size of a building in comparison to other well-known buildings of a similar size in the City. The City will soon have scale drawings of several well-known buildings available for use at design review board, Planning Commission and City Council meetings.